

Proclamation 6196 of October 9, 1990

Mental Illness Awareness Week, 1990

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

Mental illnesses affect millions of adults, children, and adolescents throughout the United States. Striking without regard to race, gender, or economic status, mental illnesses not only deprive these Americans of full, happy, and productive lives but also inflict a heavy emotional and financial burden on them and their families as well. Mental illness has become one of the most costly public health problems in our country, both in terms of wasted human potential and suffering and in terms of the cost of health care and lost school or work hours.

Fortunately, however, recent progress in the study of the human brain has strengthened hopes that mental illness can be overcome. Basic research in the biomedical and behavioral sciences has produced astounding advances in our understanding of the causes, progression, and manifestations of mental illnesses. The implications for our ongoing efforts to develop means of preventing and even curing mental illnesses are profoundly heartening.

During the past 20 years, we have made great strides in treating mental disorders and in developing drugs that ameliorate the symptoms of such conditions as depression, schizophrenia, anxiety disorders, and obsessive compulsive disorders. New techniques are leading to improved assessments of intellectual functions, as well as effective drug therapies and vocational rehabilitation programs to help persons with mental illnesses.

The success of much of the basic and clinical research that has revolutionized neuroscience can be attributed to amazing new technologies. For example, through sophisticated imaging tools and computerized tomography, physicians and scientists are now able to trace the intricate pathways through which the brain's messages flow. By literally watching the brain function in this manner, they are learning more about normal and abnormal behavior, emotion, and thought.

Last year, I signed into law House Joint Resolution 174, which called for the observance of the 1990s as the "Decade of the Brain." This resolution recognized both the advances and the opportunities that have been generated through basic brain research. It also underscored our Nation's determination to continue working—through the efforts of Federal agencies, private research foundations, health care providers, and concerned voluntary organizations—to improve the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of mental illnesses and to dispel the myths and misconceptions that too often prevent victims and their families from obtaining the help and acceptance they need and deserve.

To enhance public awareness of mental illness and to promote greater understanding for those who suffer from it, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 256 (Public Law 101-348), has designated the week beginning October 7 and ending October 13, 1990, as "Mental Illness Awareness Week" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this week.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week of October 7 through October 13, 1990, as Mental Illness Awareness Week. I call upon all Americans to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies and activities designed to foster greater understanding for mentally ill individuals and recognition of their need for treatment and rehabilitation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this ninth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fifteenth.

GEORGE BUSH

Proclamation 6197 of October 9, 1990

National Children's Day, 1990

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

Every child is a great and precious blessing, a unique individual of inestimable worth and potential. Given love, encouragement, and the opportunity to develop his or her own special gifts, every child will make a singular contribution to his family and to the world around him.

Parents have no greater or more rewarding responsibility than to welcome, nurture, and protect the children God has entrusted to their care. In addition to supplying the steady, reliable material support that is vital to their children's emotional and physical well-being, parents are charged with the stewardship of their little ones' spiritual and intellectual development.

Whether he or she is their biological, adoptive, or foster child, every youngster needs both parents' attention and affection, as well as praise and guidance. The time a child spends with his or her parents is priceless, because the lessons learned in their company will last a lifetime. Indeed, as their first teachers, best friends, and most influential role models, parents shape the course of their little ones' life's journey, helping them to grow in faith, self-discipline, self-esteem, and respect and concern for others. The importance of parents' example cannot be overstated, because without trust in God and a firm belief in what is right and good, a child is much like a ship without an anchor or a compass.

The government must not and, indeed, cannot arrogate to itself the primary responsibility of parents in caring for their children. However, it can help parents in their sometimes difficult role through wise and carefully developed measures that strengthen the family and give every child the opportunity to grow up safe, healthy, and well educated.

On this day set aside in honor of our Nation's youngest and most vulnerable citizens, let us remember that each and every child is a treasure from God. Let us also renew our determination to render our children the love and respect they need and deserve. Doing so is not only a moral imperative, it is also in our Nation's best interest. After all, the